

outskirts of Watford City, ND, which is 175 miles away from Bismarck. This is what the Jamestown Airport runway looks like.

The point is that we face a very serious threat. The urgent threat at the moment is in Bismarck, with the determination to try to solve the problem with these ice jams to prevent substantial flooding in the capital city. Our thoughts and prayers are certainly with the folks who are there today trying to do that.

In the Red River Valley—I will be there tomorrow and, hopefully, in Bismarck tomorrow night—the crest is expected in Fargo, ND, on Saturday. Our hope is that the flood fight that is occurring there goes well. Fargo has a lot of experience fighting flood waters. The mayor and others have done an extraordinary job over the years. They are building earthen dikes, filling sandbags, doing all they can, in coordination with FEMA, the Corps of Engineers, the National Weather Service, the North Dakota National Guard, and others.

I wanted to simply explain the circumstances of why we met with the President today, spoke with the Secretary of Homeland Security yesterday, and why it is important. The President, by the way, said, as President Clinton did when Grand Fork was evacuated, that the point is, in these circumstances you are not alone. This Government of ours—at the city, State, and Federal levels—brings to a flood fight a substantial amount of capability and expertise and people who know what they are doing. Added to that, the volunteers from all over our communities have done an extraordinary job.

I spoke this morning to a person who runs what was formerly called the Crippled Children's School in Jamestown, ND, which has been called in recent years the Ann Carlson School. Disadvantaged circumstances exist for the children in that school, who, when a flood comes, are not as mobile as others. They had to evacuate the Ann Carlson School yesterday. I think there were 60 to 70 children there who live in that school. They had to be evacuated. Again, these are kids with a lot of needs. They had 75 young student athletes show up from the high schools and colleges, and in 4 hours they evacuated that school. They had to take the beds and all of the special equipment those children need. In 4 hours, all those young athletes did that. The fellow who runs that school told me it was extraordinary to see how many showed up to say: Let us help you. So there is a lot going on.

I am going to travel to both the Red River Valley and to Bismarck. I wanted my colleagues to understand the circumstances. Again, to put the first chart back up, you will see that today's NOAA estimate of our country shows that our entire State is under a flood threat. It has been an extraordinary winter. Even as we have this

threat, there is a raging blizzard that is shutting down interstate highways in our State and is dropping as much as 18 inches of snow. It has been a tough time.

North Dakotans are pretty resilient people. We will get through this. I wanted to tell my colleagues about this and about why I met with the President.

188TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Greek Independence Day. My home state of Nevada is home to one of the most vibrant Greek communities in the United States, and I am pleased to join in celebration with my fellow Nevadans and Greek Americans all around our country on this 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece.

The political and philosophical legacy of ancient Greece is the very cornerstone upon which our great experiment in American democracy rests, and the United States and Greece share a proud history of cooperation and friendship. Our two countries joined together as allies in every major international conflict throughout the 20th century, and the valiant contribution of the Greeks to the Allied effort in World War II in particular cannot be understated.

Today, Greek Americans join together in celebrations both religious and secular, as Greek Independence Day coincides with the Greek Orthodox Church's celebration of the Festival of the Annunciation. As families gather to honor their Hellenic heritage with festive parades, prominent displays of the Greek flag, and preparation of traditional foods, I invite my fellow United States Senators to join me in congratulating the Greek Americans who have so enriched our country with their many contributions.

Earlier this week, I was pleased to support Senate Resolution 82, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent, and recognizes the 188th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrates Greek and American democracy. The strong partnership between the United States and Greece has prospered for nearly two centuries, and I look forward to many more years of friendship between our countries.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today marks a truly cherished day for the Greek people, Greek-Americans and for all the friends of Greece around the globe. It is the 188th anniversary of the day in 1821 when the people of Greece declared independence from the Ottoman Empire, signaling the beginning of the end of centuries of political, religious, and cultural repression of their proud and ancient culture. It took a further 8 years of heroic struggle before Greece secured its full independence.

Americans have long recognized that the ideals which guided our own strug-

gle for independence—liberty, democracy, and human dignity—were also the foundation for Greece's declaration of sovereignty. The United States and Greece were thus destined to become not only faithful allies but close friends. Nearly two centuries after the rebirth of Greek independence, our two nations and their citizens are bound by ever-strengthening bonds which link us through both a shared heritage of democratic values and a modern alignment of strategic interests.

Just as there is much to celebrate in the 188 years of modern Greece's independence, there are many challenges which it faces in the 21st century. Ongoing provocations by Turkey in the Aegean and irredentist actions by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia thwart Greece's quest for a stable southeastern Europe free of past centuries' often cataclysmic territorial adventurism. Ankara's continuing persecution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople—the leader of Greek Orthodox Christians around the world—and illegal occupation of the north of Cyprus remain an outrageous affront not only to Hellenes but to people everywhere who believe in human rights.

Therefore, on this anniversary of Greek independence, let us not only celebrate and congratulate our friends in Greece but also rededicate ourselves to strengthening the relationship that exists between our two great nations, so as to defend its foundational principles and ensure its vitality in the centuries to come.

TRIBUTE TO EDWARD R. WARD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a member of our Armed Forces from my home State of Kentucky, 1LT Edward R. "Eddie" Ward, who is being inducted posthumously into the U.S. Army Aviation Association of America's Order of Saint Michael.

Established in 1900, the Order of St. Michael recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to the promotion of Army aviation. Those selected have demonstrated the standards of integrity and moral character, displayed an outstanding degree of professional competence, and served the U.S. Army aviation or civilian aviation community with distinction. There are three levels of the Order of St. Michael—Bronze, Silver, and Gold. First Lieutenant Ward is receiving Gold, the top level, which is awarded when an individual exhibits the highest values of honesty and ethical character.

Ward first enlisted in the Army in 1901 at the age of 19. Six years later, at the age of 25, he was assigned by the signal officer of the Army to take charge of "... all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and all kindred subjects." Ward became the first noncommissioned officer of the enlisted nucleus that eventually evolved into the present-day Aviation Branch of the Army.

His career was comprised of a great deal of leadership. He headed the team that uncrated and prepared the Wright aircraft for military trials at Fort Omaha. He also served at several air schools including Fort Omaha and the Philippines Air School. However the majority of his career was spent in the Aeronautic Branch of the Signal Corps until his retirement from the armed forces in 1930.

The Order of St. Michael uses the story of St. Michael defeating the dragon to exemplify the bravery and gallantry associated with the aviation soldier and the boldness and swiftness of aviation on the battlefield. Edward Ward was a true Kentuckian and an American hero who epitomizes the heroism and courage told in this story. He was a prime example of the brave and dedicated soldiers that make our military the best in the world.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join with me in recognizing 1LT Edward R. Ward's dedication to our military and our country.

OMNIBUS PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT ACT

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, today, Congress can be very proud of a very significant accomplishment.

Because today, Congress stood up for the enjoyment and protection of some of our nation's most pristine and breathtaking wilderness areas, historical sites, national parks, forests, trails, scenic rivers, and oceans. This bill will help our country address the impacts of climate change on our coastal areas, and provide educational opportunities for our Nation's children.

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives will pass the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 one of the most sweeping conservation bills that Congress has passed in many years.

It is a huge victory for the generations of Americans who enjoy these sites each year.

It is a huge victory for our American heritage.

And, it is a huge victory for Washington State.

This bill has been through many twists and turns over the last year.

But today's successful vote could not have been possible without the tenacity and dedication of Majority Leader REID.

I thank the majority leader for his steadfast support and dedication to seeing that these important public land and ocean priorities became law.

Today, I would like to highlight some of the provisions in this bill that I am especially pleased to see go to the President's desk.

First, this package includes the Snoqualmie Pass Land Conveyance Act, which I sponsored. This bill would transfer an acre and a half of Forest Service land to the Snoqualmie Pass Fire District to help them build a new fire station.

For decades, the Fire District has been leasing its current site from the Forest Service. They operate out of an aging building that was not designed to be a fire station.

While they have been able to serve their community despite this building's many shortcomings, the time has come for us to pay them back for their hard work and dedication. With traffic on the rise and the need for emergency services in the area growing, the Fire District needs to move to a true fire station and this bill will finally help them do that.

Second, the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail Designation Act is included in this bill.

Since 2001, I have been working with communities in Central and Eastern Washington, the National Park Service, and community stakeholders to create an Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail through portions of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.

Visitors to the trail will not only provide an important economic boost to central and eastern Washington communities, but they will learn about an amazing, and often overlooked, part of our region's history.

You see, most people don't know that during the last Ice Age, when a glacial lake in Montana formed and deepened enough, the sheer force of the backed up water undermined the glacial ice-dam. And, the ice gave way in a crackling explosion.

The huge lake, bigger than all the rivers of the world today combined, was released all at once and carved its way through the Pacific Northwest. This changed the region's geography. But these cataclysmic floods have been a story that's gone largely untold. Because of this bill, more people will know this important part of Pacific Northwest history.

Third, this package includes my Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail Act.

The Pacific Northwest Trail runs from the Continental Divide to the Pacific Coast, is 1,200 miles long, and is one of the most pristine and breathtaking trails in the world.

This carefully chosen path runs through the Rocky Mountains, Selkirk Mountains, Pasayten Wilderness, North Cascades, Olympic Mountains, and Wilderness Coast.

From beginning to end it passes through three states. It crosses three National Parks. And it winds through seven National Forests.

Finally, this trail will receive the designation it deserves.

This package also includes my Wildland Firefighter Safety legislation.

Wildland firefighting and the safety of wildland firefighters is vitally important to our brave men and women who battle these blazes, and for the communities that depend on them. This legislation will improve accountability and transparency in wildland firefighter safety training programs.

Through training and certification we can lower the risk to the brave men and women who protect our forests and communities. It's critical that Congress is actively engaged to make sure this happens.

I would also like to mention the three provisions in this package aimed at conserving and protecting our nation's oceans and the communities that depend on them.

This is particularly important in these days of economic turmoil, as millions of Americans depend directly and indirectly on healthy oceans and coasts.

Also, as our climate changes, we must work to address some of the issues that have the potential to affect millions of jobs.

That is why I was thankful that Majority Leader REID included several provisions in this package that address our oceans.

I am particularly thrilled about the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act.

The world's oceans are absorbing roughly 22 million tons of carbon dioxide every day, causing seawater chemistry to become more acidic possibly withholding the basic chemical building blocks needed by many marine organisms.

This act creates a comprehensive national ocean acidification research and monitoring program that will take a hard look at the devastating impacts greenhouse gas emissions are having on our oceans.

All of this could not have been accomplished without the strong support and hard work and dedication of the majority leader and I thank the leader for successfully moving these priorities.

Today is a proud day for Congress, for Washington State, for our world's ocean and marine environments, and for some of the most breathtaking views and important legacies this Nation has to offer.

Because the steps we have taken in this package will protect our lands, our coastal areas, and our first responders.

UNNECESSARY KILLING OF BABY SEALS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, yesterday Senator COLLINS and I submitted Senate Resolution 84, urging the Government of Canada to end the senseless and inhumane slaughter of seals off the east coast of Canada.

To reiterate, on March 18, 2009, just weeks before its hunting season was scheduled to begin, Russia announced that it would ban the hunting and killing of baby seals. Youri Trutnev, Russia's Minister of Natural Resources, who was quoted in the New York Times last week, graphically depicted the shameful practice, saying: "The bloody sight of the hunting of seals, the slaughter of these defenseless animals, which you cannot even call a real hunt, is banned in our country, just as well as in most developed countries."